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HLW & FD

EIS PROJECT - AR/PF
Control # DC-04

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Comment on High-Level Waste and Facilities Disposition Draft EIS

I appreciate the opportunity to provide input on the Idaho High-Level Waste and Facilities Disposition Draft Environmental Impact Statement (Draft EIS) and regret that I could not be here in person.

As a life-long Idahoan, I am a strong supporter of the people and programs at the Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory (INEEL). The INEEL has served the nation and contributed to the enhancement of Idaho for over fifty years, continues to do so today, and will continue to in the future.

Although the INEEL has been and continues to be an asset to the nation and Idaho, the environmental legacy of Cold War weapons production and the INEEL missions has left 4200 cubic meters of mixed high-level waste calcine and 1.4 million gallons of liquid mixed transuranic/sodium-bearing waste. This high-level waste must be safely disposed of so that future generations are not burdened by this legacy. The process established by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) includes an Environmental Impact Statement as the method of ensuring that federal decisions that could significantly affect the quality of the environment are made considering all the facts. Paramount in this process are considerations of the environment and public and worker health and safety. This public comment period allows input to the decision making process prior to initiation of major federal actions.

As a step toward cleaning up the waste in Idaho, the 1995 Settlement Agreement between the State of Idaho and the Departments of Energy and Navy identifies milestones that must be met for treatment and removal of the waste from Idaho. I am a strong supporter of the 1995 Settlement Agreement and will do all that I can to ensure that the Department of Energy continues to meet its obligations to clean up the Cold War legacy at the INEEL. To date, all portions of the agreement have been met.

This Draft EIS discusses actions that feed directly into meeting the milestones to complete calcination of sodium-bearing liquid high-level waste by December 31, 2012, and to complete treatment of all high-level waste so it is ready to be moved out of Idaho by December 31, 2035.

The Draft EIS identifies nine waste processing alternatives and six different facility disposition alternatives that must be carefully evaluated to ensure that the final EIS and subsequent record of decision reflect the best interests of Idahoans, the nation, and the environment.

EXHIBIT #4
HLW&FD Draft EIS
Idaho Falls, ID
February 7, 2000
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Some of the waste processing alternatives, if chosen, would not meet all aspects of the Settlement Agreement. The Draft EIS states that two of the alternatives will not meet the 2035 milestone for having high-level waste ready for shipment out of Idaho. One of these two is the No Action Alternative, which is required to be investigated to provide a baseline for the NEPA process. In addition, the Draft EIS states that it may be difficult to have all liquid waste out of the underground storage tanks and cease using them by 2012 for seven of the alternatives.

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V.I.D. (u) I am a strong supporter of the Settlement Agreement and I urge the state and Department of Energy to choose an alternative that meets the milestones in the court-enforceable Agreement. I also want to encourage all Idahoans to review the Draft EIS and participate in the public comment period. Public comment is an important part of federal agency decision-making and is one of the factors that will be considered when choosing a course of action.

Sincerely,

Michael D. Crapo
United States Senator

- New Information -

Idaho HLW & FD EIS